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ARMY MANNERS AND MORALS

When Secretary Taft returns from the Philippines pretty nearly the first business which he will find upon his desk calling for action is the need of calling various courts of inquiry which it will be necessary to order in regard to the testimony given by army officers in the Taggart divorce case.

Nobody expects, as Kipling has pointed out in regard to the army private, that army officers shall be "plaster of paris saints." But the articles of war themselves require that the holder of a commission shall be a gentleman as well as an officer. Scandal and all that follows scandal to the final end of divorce proceedings are inevitable wherever men and women, more or less idle and lacking moral restraint, are brought together.

But it is not so much the morals in the evidence in the Taggart case which are shocking as the personal license and unrestrained conduct laid bare at an army post by the evidence of officers on both sides. Much was evidently due to the lamentable fact that the post where most of this occurred had a commanding officer of whom the best that can be said is that he was weak, while the worst charged by a brother officer in a deposition at the trial is as bad as can be alleged by one man against any man.

But throughout the evidence which relates to conduct in Porto Rico, in Chicago, in San Francisco and in the Philippines, at army quarters and army society, has shown a lack of respect for the ordinary conventions and proprieties of life, such as is in a sense perfectly well understood by sensible men worse than actual immorality. There are cases where it is, in a true sense, worse to be vulgar and vicious than to be vicious alone.

The army has been enlarged two and a half fold in the last seven years. The corresponding increase in the number of officers has made it necessary to give commissions to a large number of men of whom in the nature of things little could be known and who knew little themselves of the restraint required of an officer. Secretary Taft can do no greater service for the morality of the army than by prompt and vigorous action, which shows that the secretary of war, at least, is aware of the code and manners, if not of conduct, which must control officers if an army is to maintain its discipline and retain the respect of the nation it defends, all of whose citizens desire to believe that every officer is a gentleman.—Philadelphia Press.

THE SKILLAGALEE

Eighteen feet from the tip of his snout to the tail, the largest fish that was ever brought into T wharf came in yesterday on the Ida Silva, sword fishermen, having been captured after a fight only equaled by John Boyle O'Reilly's "fight with the amber whale." For twelve miles the monster towed a dory containing Everett Dowdy and Daniel McDonald, who had harpooned it, thinking it was a swordfish. A score of times it turned and attacked the boat, a hundred times it sought the bottom, endeavoring to pull the frail dory down after it and only being prevented by the length of the harpoon rope.

The fish was styled a skillagalee or large billfish by the authorities on T wharf, but never before was one of the species known to grow to half its size.

All day yesterday the animal was on exhibition at the store of the Gloucester Fish company in Atlantic avenue, and a wondering crowd marveled at its proportions. Its tail measured six feet when extended, its side fin was nearly two feet long and its huge

dorsal was nearly four feet. It had a sharp nose, about two feet long, as hard as a Roman sword, and its head was larger than a swordfish.

Daniel McDonald told a Journal man the story of the capture. "A week ago," he said, "in a dead calm, Dowdy and I put off in a dory. We had rowed but a short distance from the ship when we saw this fish rising, and as he reached the surface I put a harpoon into him. Then I saw that he was like no swordfish that ever lived. He tore around in the water, creating enormous waves, and then dashed at the boat. He hit it a number of times with his body, but his sword was so short in proportion that he was unable to use it.

"Then he started to run away. The line grew taut, and we tore through the water like a torpedo boat. Twenty knots we did if we did one, and dories aren't made to stand a strain like that.

"After a while it tried to ease up, but each time we pulled taut on the rope. This finally tired him out. He was bleeding all the time, and at last, five hours after we harpooned him, he turned over. Then we started to pull back to the ship. She was fully ten miles away, and the monster, which weighed 1,400 pounds, was not easy to move, even in the water. We finally got back, completely tired out. It was a great victory."

BRIEF

Highway robbery does not consist wholly of stopping wayfarers on the public road. Some of the worst instances have happened near legislative halls.

Ever hear the story of the man who, while walking through the fields, came to a high stone wall? "I'll jump it!" he exclaimed. In order to get a good start he backed off a mile, and then ran with all his might until he reached the wall. But when he reached it he was too tired to jump, so he lay down in its shade and went to sleep. That's the way a great many of us are about our work. We spend so much time and effort getting ready to do something that when we get to it we are too tired.

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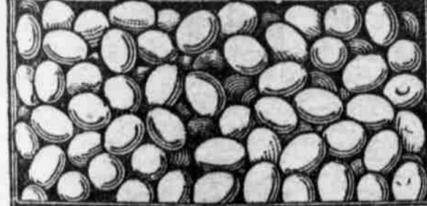
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